

# What Society Can Do

The words "All men are created equal"—variously ascribed by the youngsters to God, Jefferson, Lincoln, the Bible, and the Constitution—may seem out of place in the hard-bitten world of today. But the youngsters repeat them over and over again. What's more, they take them seriously and make clear, concrete suggestions as to what society can do to make the spirit of the words an actuality. Here are kids' earnest pleas and serious suggestions. Adults might do well to listen to the advice of their youngsters.

ARE WE GOING to fight a situation which threatens America's greatness and if so, how?

## —legislation

For one thing, we could pass some laws making discrimination illegal. Both parties have said they were for a permanent FEPC. That is one good bill which our new congress will probably pass.

Our congress could pass bills illegalizing the poll tax and any other laws or actions that would keep the southern negro and poor white from voting. It is said that an anti-poll tax law would be unconstitutional. The undemocraticness and down-right wrongness of the poll tax is apparent to all but those who believe in the doctrine of race inequality plus those who need it in order to keep their power.

We should pass a federal anti-lynching law, laws making discrimination in public housing, hospitals and medical positions, and in the schools illegal. We should see to it that discrimination in the armed forces is stopped.

## —political action

However, having an enlightened legislature is a necessary prerequisite to having enlightened legislation. Our present legislatures, despite some recent improvements, do not to me seem overwhelmingly enlightened but we do get a chance to better it some more in two years, and again in another two years. Therefore liberal and democratic people all over the country should get together for political action.

## —education

I think we should remember that, although we may pass many anti-discrimination laws, just a word or two, in some of them, may render them worthless. We should also acknowledge that just to pass a lot of anti-

discrimination laws and expect everybody to be tolerant, then and forever afterwards, is useless. Much more must be done. A vast educational program for understanding should be set up and put into action—one that would take form in millions of pamphlets, thorough discussion of the subject in schools, movies, churches, and on the air, in which all decent newspapers and magazines would take a leading part.

In connection with this educational program for tolerance and appreciation, general education should be extended. The federal government should further subsidize those states which can't afford a good education for their youth—taking care that it's money is spent only in programs which give equal opportunities to all.

## —economic rights

I want to emphasize that if we are to destroy the seeds of prejudice—the very thing from which ugly stuff grows, we must destroy, wipe out, obliterate, those economic evils which make it impossible for a human being to live as a human being should live.

It is nothing but human for a man who has struggled for a very existence his entire life, and is then thrown out of work, to take his wrath out on people who are seemingly different from himself. We know thru experience that the unemployed are the first to be taken in by the bigoted.

Who can deny that it takes mighty strong mental fibre for Catholics not to hate Jews, for Jews not to hate Negroes, for Negroes not to hate Italians, for Italians not to hate Irish—when they're all desperately competing for jobs that aren't there anyhow.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION can be stopped by giving jobs and other benefits to those who need them, and not because they are special friends.

*—political equality*

I LIKE SOME of the people of different nationalities, but some of the white people do not think this about us. Some of them say that we should not have a right to vote and many other things, but I disagree because I think that we should have equal rights just like people of other races. Some don't like us because of our color although we didn't make ourselves.

*—civic cooperation*

MANY LOCAL, state, city, and community problems could be solved by setting up boards or advisory committees composed of members of all groups and acting jointly on problems brought before them. Extensive and intelligent propaganda in films, radio programs, books, pamphlets, and magazines, can also do much in presenting and helping to solve this problem for the American public.

It is only through such programs of education, propaganda, and cooperation that we can reach a system of racial and social harmony under which our country will flourish and develop as never before.

*—a chance to prove one's worth*

RACE DISCRIMINATION has been in part eliminated by the National Maritime Union. Men, who belong to it, sail on ships from northern and southern ports. Both negroes and whites stand the same watch, eat the same food, endure the same dangers and live under the same conditions. Under these conditions the men found the negroes to be just as capable in performing their duties as the whites. They have also proven in our past history that they can fight, and now they are proving they are just as capable in leadership.

NEGROES SHOULD certainly be allowed to play on major league ball teams. One of the best ways to racial tolerance is through sport.

Negroes should be allowed to go to any public school. Education in the U. S. is free for all people so Negroes should not be restricted.

*—better living conditions*

IN THE MATTER of housing Negroes should have better homes. That is one reason why we have

so much sickness. With the homes we do have we could fix them up the best we can. But today we do have nice homes in some parts of the city. If Negroes, as a whole, would be neater than they are, and have more respect for themselves, we could go more places.

I DO NOT BELIEVE that "Fancy education" and housing projects for the Negro are a waste of time.

*—home and church*

I THINK you're particular interested in the grade school kids because when they usually get to high school they know pretty well how to act. I wouldn't know of much they could do to help themselves other than get a little more home training which in most case is impossible because both their mothers and fathers are working to make ends meet.

CAN'T OUR CHURCHES help? Dispite of what church you belong to. The Bible teaches that all men are equal and God looks to all men as his Children. Surely when we die, as is our eternal fate, God won't send all the white races to glory, all the yellow races to purgatory and the black races to hell. Will he? (*Negro girl, age 14*)

*—take action*

THE RACIAL PROBLEM cannot be settled by fighting or by words. It can only be settled by living and working together, by the understanding of each others feelings and views.

America is our country; it is ours to keep free. But how can we hope to keep it free if we must fight among ourselves because of mere accidents of birth, race, and religion?

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